

# San Diego DX Club Bulletin

May 2018



## K9RHY/KL7

### MAY PROGRAM

**A Wire in the Air: What Matters Most**  
Kristen McIntyre, K6WX

### MEETING NOTICE:

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 23, 2018**

**JOIN US AT THE SIZZLER, 3755 Murphy Canyon Road,  
San Diego, CA 92123 (858) 278-6988**  
**SOCIAL HOUR, 5:00 P.M. DINNER, 5:30 P.M.**  
**MEETING, 6:30 P.M**

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## From the Prez . . .

*Mike, NA6MB*



I guess the country is starting to thaw out and hams are getting their stations back in shape. Maybe getting ready for spring and summer contests?

There have been a few interesting contests already. A few I have worked so far are, January 7 ARRL RTTY Round Up, May 5 7QP, NEQP, DEQP and May 12 Volta RTTY contest. In addition to the national and world contests going on, there is preparation for field day June 23 to 24.

In my opinion, Field Day is the best “Non-contest contest” of the year for helping to get new hams on the air for the first time or on HF if they are Technician class. I really enjoy showing new hams how to do HF and watching them enjoy a short stint on HF! Since the SDDXC doesn’t do Field Day, find a local club and impart some of your knowledge and experience to their effort.

This being San Diego, we don’t need a thaw here, just some motivation for work on the NA6MB / K6GO station. So many projects to do and so little time.

I am nearly finished working on phase one of my two new antenna switches. One switch is four inputs and one output for switching radios. With the ELAD FDM-DUO added to the FT-2000, I want to use both more easily. I currently have manual switches to do this, but I am trying to make the whole shack computer controlled. It would also be great to get the IC-7000 on the air once in a while. The new radio switch should make that work. The other switch is one input and eight outputs to select antennas. We need to switch SteppIR (40-6), R7 (40-10), 80/40 dipole, 160 vertical. Phase one is a manually controlled switch, but phase two will to automate the switch with an Arduino Nano. It will be selectable as either radio (band decode) or network controlled. It seems that a ham shack is never really finished...

Speaking of unfinished projects, I think I finally solved the RFI into my station DC system monitor. I have a 135AH AGM battery for power backup. It is connected with a “Power Gate” unit that switches from the Astron DC supply to battery power when AC power and therefore the Astron go down. The battery system has a meter to read charge or discharge current, voltage, watts and watt hours. Anytime I would transmit on 40 or 80 the meter would start flashing, show all LCD segments and generally freak out.

I have shielded the meter, the cables, grounded it all, added toroids and capacitor bypass, but no luck. The latest effort was to remove the snap on toroids from the transceiver AC cord and use one 2.5 inch ring with 4 turns. That seems to have solved the problem! We'll see if ALL frequencies are cured, but looks good so far.

On May 18-20 many of our members will be in Dayton or should I say Xenia for the Dayton Hamvention. New products and all of the national vendors show up to hawk their wares. That is always a good show, but too late to plan a trip for this year.

Gayle, K6GO and I never planned to go to Dayton this year. Instead, from May 30 to June 17 we (and a group of other hams from SDDXC) are going to go to a Friedrichshafen, Germany ham radio show simply called HAM RADIO. This is the Dayton of Europe only much bigger. After the show we plan to go to Munich for a few days, then Prague to get on a river cruise to Berlin. Then, back in town for a while before our July trip to Grand Cayman Island for IARU and NAQP RTTY. We had a blast last year in the RTTY contest, so decided to do it again!

It is hard not to notice FT8 is huge these days. It is a great mode for simpler stations to make DX contacts. As Levi, KK6NON and John, NA6L pointed out last month, the bands are packed when open and still have a few signals left when the band would normally be closed. I worked the Lord Howe Island DXpedition, VK9LI on FT8 on 17m, just before the band totally closed late in the evening. The new experimental DXpedition FT8 mode will allow DXpeditions to still make lots of contacts even under poor propagation conditions. Several major DXpeditions are planning to use this mode for their operations. For 2018, I've worked 890 Q's so far: 116 RTTY (contest) and 774 FT8. It is a very nice mode for low signal levels. I wonder if it will be like packet when that took over in the late 70's. Many stations the first few years then fading to almost nothing. I am thinking maybe not since it is a worldwide vs local VHF/UHF phenomena. Time will tell that story.

73 and good DX

*Mike*, **NA6MB**



## Secretary/Treasurer Reports

*Randy, KQ6RS*

### Meeting Minutes, April 25, 2018

At 6:30 pm Mike Binder, NA6MB called the meeting to order. 41 members and no guests were in attendance.

Old business – The March minutes and Treasurer report were approved.

New business – New members Magdalena Tamulski, KM6KSN and Rafal Tamulski, N6TRA were approved by a vote of the membership. We are expecting a check to arrive from the Visalia DX Convention.

At 6:42 pm we started the roundtable discussion.

At 7:22 pm we took a break.

At 7:31 pm John Vissat, NA6L gave a presentation on WSJT-X FT8 Digital Mode including the new DXpedition mode.

At 8:34 pm the meeting was adjourned.

### Treasurer's Report

Income for April: \$20.00 for membership.

Expenses for April: \$20 CA filing for Statement of Information, \$18.30 for speaker's dinner.

Statement Balance on 4/6/2018: \$6,272.17



*Randy, KQ6RS*

## VP Report

Ron, **WB1EAZ**



It seems that early spring weather is hanging on here in the backcountry. Temps got down into the 30s last night and the forecast is for more cool weather. Personally, I like this weather rather than the 90+ degree weather that is typical of summer here. From the reports at our April meeting, it seems that Visalia went well with registration desk volunteers coming through. Thanks again to all who helped.

Our program last month, which was provided by John, NA6L, and Levi, KK6NON, on FT-8, was well attended with valuable tips shared to the group. The third public test of FT-8 DXpedition mode was conducted May 5<sup>th</sup> and deemed a success by the organizers. Propagation was spotty, but 405 unique call signs were copied. They had to shift to 14.115 MHz to avoid RTTY contest activity. Based on the test, the team anticipates releasing the production version of FT-8 with the DXpedition mode by the end of May.

FT-8 also continues its popularity on the bands. Recently I worked C8T on 30M on FT-8. None of the spots noted that they were using the DXpedition mode but after a few attempts, the FT-8 program noted that I should be using the DXpedition mode. Fortunately I worked them (3 times according to club log). My one comment on the FT8 program is that the developers need to have a system where the fox shows clearly that they are working the DXpedition mode. Along the same track, when I worked C8T, I was interested in what the propagation looked like. So I went to VOCAP and the 24 hour prediction wheel. I was surprised to see that the input options included FT-8. It is interesting to see the predictions for FT-8 to C8T. At 0400Z, it predicts 6% success for SSB, 27% for CW and 39% for FT-8. Looking at the predictions for the 3B9 operation, at 0300Z, it shows no opening for SSB, 49% for CW and 66% for FT8. The C8T news notes that they have been going to the FT8 mode frequently when propagation is poor and having quite a bit of success. Any DXers who are planning on working Baker Island or Ducie may want to familiarize themselves with the DXpedition mode.

Last month, I noted the article on page 64-65 of the May QST that discusses how to use JTAlerts sent to your cell phone. The article describes how to set up the JTAlert on your computer to send an email to your cell phone. This appears to have a real use for those of us who are not near enough to the computer to hear an audible alert- whether one may be somewhere else in the house or away from home. The article is missing some details for using Google or Yahoo email, but I am working with the author of the article to flush out the details. If anyone is also interested, let me know and I will keep you in the loop. If anyone has the programming knowledge, please get in touch with me.

## **April Program**

### **WSJT-X Digital Mode: Hints and Kinks**

**By NA6L and KK6NON**

The program explored the tips and tricks about the new WSJT-X FT-8 Digital Mode including the new FT-8 DXpedition mode (currently in Beta testing).

John went through the FT-8 program and provided excellent sources as references for working the mode. Levi provided an exciting live demonstration of the program remoting from the meeting to his station. As the FT-8 DXpedition mode software is being tweaked, it is expected that "Q" rates of up to 500 per hour will be possible in good conditions. The goal is to use the FT8 DXpedition mode during the KH1/KH7Z DXpedition to Baker and Howland Islands (starting this June 26th).

## **May Program**

### **A Wire in the Air**

#### **What Matters Most**

**Kristen McIntyre, K6WX**

The magic of radio happens when we couple RF into the fabric of spacetime. We do that with an antenna. These devices are simultaneously simple and complex. It's easy to get lost in the theory or fooled by the latest anecdote. Let's look at what's important in antenna choice and design. There are things that matter more than others, and it's never perfect. Also a bit of theory will help guide us. Radiation resistance, loss, pattern gain, terrain, polarization, coupling, loading - they all play a role. Join Kristen to find out what happens and what matters when we put a wire in the air.

Kristen McIntyre, K6WX, has been interested in radio since she was about 5 years old. She started in Amateur Radio in 1979, getting her ticket while at MIT. Kristen has worked in many diverse areas from analog circuit design to image processing to starting and running an ISP. She is currently working at Apple in Core Networking, and spent many years at Sun Microsystems Laboratories where she was researching robustness and emergent properties of large distributed computer systems. She is a long-time denizen of Silicon Valley and has worked at or consulted for many of the usual suspects. Kristen is an active ham and loves to chase DX on HF with her Elecraft K2, which she built while visiting her mother in Florida. She is ARRL Pacific Division Vice Director, president of the Palo Alto Amateur Radio Assoc., the Q&A columnist for Nuts and Volts magazine, and is active in many local clubs. Kristen was recently inducted into the CQ Amateur Radio Hall of Fame.

*Ron,* **WB1EAZ**

## THE SDDXC TOP 10

By John, K6AM

### TOTAL COUNTRIES WORKED ON 17 METERS

| 5/18 | 5/17 | CALL   | ZNS | C-D | CFM | WKD | CHG |
|------|------|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1.   | 2.   | K6AM   | 40  | 326 | 332 | 337 | -   |
| 2.   | 3.   | K6XT   | 40  | 306 | 315 | 327 | -   |
| 3.   | 4.   | N7CW   | 40  | 312 | 312 | 326 | -   |
| 4.   | 5.   | W6YI   | 39  | 303 | 305 | 323 | +2  |
| 5.   | 6.   | K0XB   | 40  | 312 | 315 | 316 | -   |
| 6.   | 7.   | K6ZH   | 40  | 291 | 294 | 307 | -   |
| 7.   | 8.   | N6CW   | 39  | ?   | 231 | 297 | -   |
| 8.   | 9.   | WB6BFG | 39  | 282 | 284 | 293 | -   |
| 9.   | 10.  | W6YOO  | 37  | 281 | 286 | 286 | -   |
| 10.  | -    | NA6L   | 39  | 275 | 275 | 281 | NEW |

### TOTAL COUNTRIES WORKED ON 12 METERS

| 5/18 | 5/17 | CALL   | ZNS | C-D | CFM | WKD | CHG |
|------|------|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1.   | 2.   | K6AM   | 40  | 308 | 314 | 321 | -   |
| 2.   | 3.   | W6YI   | 39  | 273 | 275 | 301 | +1  |
| 3.   | 4.   | N7CW   | 40  | 260 | 260 | 300 | -   |
| 4.   | 5.   | K6XT   | 40  | 266 | 274 | 299 | -   |
| 5.   | 6.   | K0XB   | 39  | 288 | 290 | 292 | +2  |
| 6.   | 7.   | N6CW   | 39  | ?   | 192 | 268 | -   |
| 7.   | 8.   | WB6BFG | 40  | 247 | 249 | 263 | -   |
| 8.   | 9.   | NA6L   | 39  | 253 | 253 | 261 | +5  |
| 9.   | 10.  | K6ZH   | 38  | 239 | 242 | 250 | -   |
| 10.  | -    | WN6K   | 39  | 220 | 221 | 246 | NEW |

With last year's number one player dropping out, everyone moves up one place. John NA6L makes his first appearance on the 17 meter list and W6YI inches closer to the top spot. As cycle 24 heads down the back side, these bands are now starting to run out of steam and may be stalled for several more years to come. BTW, don't forget to send me an updated report that includes your new Kosovo (Z6) QSO.

Both of these lists are much easier to break into than the other bands. If you're not playing the WARC bands, you're missing a chance to experience the thrill of working a new one several times every month. The little Cushcraft WARC dipole is all you need to get started. The newer Force 12 Antennas work on 12 and 17 with a couple dB of gain as well.

Each month, we will publish top ten lists for one of the lesser recognized but hard won categories. Coming up next, 160 meters, digital and band-countries. Please send me your totals for each band throughout the year and you will be listed in coming months. Use the convenient form at <http://www.sddxc.org> or bring 'em to the meeting.

John, K6AM

## SDDXC RESULTS

By John, K6AM

### 2017 ARRL SWEEPSTAKES CW CONTEST

| CLASS    | CALL                               | SCORE   | QSO'S | MLTS |                        |
|----------|------------------------------------|---------|-------|------|------------------------|
| MS - HP  | W6YI (+K6AM N6AN N6KI N6WIN W2PWS) | 306,602 | 1,847 | 83   | #1 US/VE               |
| SOU - HP | NX6T (KK6NON)                      | 209,990 | 1,265 | 83   | #1 SW DIV<br>#14 US/VE |
| SO - LP  | WN6K                               | 103,356 | 638   | 81   | #2 SW DIV<br>#15 US/VE |
| SO - HP  | W6JBR                              | 10,918  | 103   | 53   |                        |

John, K6AM

## From the Editor

Bob, K9RHY



Susanne and I are flying to Anchorage, Alaska (to visit my 50th state—a Bucket List goal). We'll be touring the Denali National Park, add to our soapstone carving collection and eat fresh salmon. We're then heading to Sonoma to meet up with the kids. Back with another note in June,

73,

Bob, K9RHY